

Applic. No. 10/823,222
Amdt. dated March 26, 2007
Reply to Office action of January 8, 2007

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MAR 26 2007Claim Amendments

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions,
and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (withdrawn-currently amended): A method of feeding
~~sheets to a sheet-processing machine, which comprises the~~
following steps:

placing a sheet with a leading edge, as defined by a sheet
transport direction through the machine, against front lays on
a feed table with a transport device, where the feed table is
formed with a guide surface in a feeder region thereof and the
guide surface is curved in the sheet transport direction;

smoothing the leading edge of the sheet by imparting to the
sheet a curvature in the sheet transport direction with a
smoothing device configured to assist in laying the sheet
against the guide surface; and

subsequently gripping the sheet with a further transport
device.

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Claim 2 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 1, wherein the sheet-processing machine is a printing press and the sheets are cyclically fed to the further transport device.

Claim 3 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 1, which comprises imparting a downward curvature on the sheet leading edge.

Claim 4 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 1, which comprises imparting an upward curvature on the sheet leading edge.

Claim 5 (cancelled).

Claim 6 (original): In a sheet-processing machine, an apparatus for feeding sheets to the sheet-processing machine, comprising: a feed table formed with a guide surface in a feeder region thereof, said guide surface being curved in a sheet transport direction to the sheet-processing machine, and a smoothing device configured to assist in laying the sheet against said guide surface.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said smoothing device includes said guide surface ~~is formed with~~ a plurality of blowing/suction nozzles formed

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in said guide surface transversely with respect to the sheet transport direction and forming blown air jets directed substantially in the sheet transport direction, said plurality of blowing/suction nozzles being configured to assist in laying the sheet against said curved guide surface.

Claim 8 (original): The apparatus according to claim 6, which further comprises a plurality of top lays configured for assisting in laying the sheet against said curved guide surface and adapted to a curvature of said curved guide surface.

Claim 9 (original): The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said curved guide surface and said curved top lays together form a pocket for receiving therein the sheet leading edge.

Claim 10 (original): The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said curved guide surface is formed with a plurality of suction openings arranged transversely with respect to the sheet transport direction.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The apparatus according to claim 10, which comprises a vacuum device having a valve, said vacuum device configured to apply a vacuum to said suction

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openings chronologically one after another, starting from a center and proceeding laterally outwardly.

Claim 12 (currently amended): The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said ~~vacuum device includes~~ valve is a rotary valve.

Claim 13. The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said ~~vacuum device includes~~ valve is a plurality of electrically driven control valves.

Claim 14 (currently amended): The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said ~~vacuum device includes~~ valve is a plurality of magnetically driven control valves.

Claim 15 (cancelled).

Claim 16 (currently amended): In an apparatus for guiding sheets to a sheet-processing machine, the apparatus having a feed table with a feeder region, the improvement which comprises: the feed table having a plurality of suction openings formed in the feeder region and arranged transversely with respect to a sheet transport direction, and a vacuum device having a valve, said vacuum device configured to sequentially apply a vacuum to said suction openings one after

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another, starting from a center opening and in each case
laterally outward.

Claim 17 (currently amended): The apparatus according to
claim 16, wherein said ~~vacuum device includes~~ valve is a
rotary valve.

Claim 18 (currently amended): The apparatus according to
claim 16, wherein said ~~vacuum device includes~~ valve is a
plurality of electrically driven control valves.

Claim 19 (currently amended): The apparatus according to
claim 16, wherein said ~~vacuum device includes~~ valve is a
plurality of magnetically driven control valves.